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**A HANDBOOK
OF
PYROGRAPHY
OR
BURNT WOOD ETCHING**

**BY
Mrs. Maud Maude**

WITH THIRTY-TWO ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATIONS

By WILLIAM FREEMAN

PRICE 1/6 NETT.

**LONDON:
DAWBARN & WARD, LIMITED.**



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A HANDBOOK OF PYROGRAPHY.



CHAPTER I.

IN writing this little book on Poker work or Pyrography, my great object is to interest the public in the art as applicable to interior decoration, and to instruct them in the best and simplest methods of following up that interest to their own pleasure and satisfaction.

It is not necessary to give the past history of the Art, although we have sufficient evidence to show that for many years and by various nations it has been practised in a desultry and imperfect fashion.

The tools used were pokers heated in the fire or over a spirit lamp, and the difficulty of obtaining and keeping them at the right heat must have considerably hindered the artist in his efforts. But we have changed all that with the introduction of the "Vulcan" Wood Etching Machine, which leaves little to be desired as a means of obtaining perfection in the art of so called Poker Work.

This little machine, of which a full description will be given later on, is of English make, being an improved model of one of German production.

Believing it to be an improvement, and also being sufficiently patriotic to fully appreciate the term "English," I shall allude to the "Vulcan" only, in these

pages, I will merely mention here that it is cleanly and compact, and as easily held in the hand as a lead pencil.

There has in past years been another difficulty in the way of Pyrographic progress namely, the lack of material to which to apply the finished work. There were no "stores" with their profusion of dainty and tastefully designed wooden articles of every description, such as one sees now a days. The article required had to be made specially by a local carpenter, generally a slow and expensive undertaking. Now, however, we have abundant choice in almost every town or village, and having once overcome the material difficulty, there need be no question of how to apply our work. It is suitable to all departments of interior decorations, from the homely linen press, to the most delicate drawing-room tea screen, and is equally appropriate in either position.

The reader would do well to remember that Pyrography is not brought to notice in these pages as a *novelty*, in the ordinarily accepted sense of the word, but as a nucleus of something to be indefinitely carried forward in many directions. When a new occupation, amusement, call it what you will, is originated, everyone seizes upon it, is charmed to find it so easy, learns to do it "*perfectly* in three lessons," finds everyone else can do it, gets tired of it and it dies the death. It is part of our nature to esteem things according to what they have cost us; what is lightly obtained is slightly valued, and the "novelty" with no other quality to recommend it but its newness and the ease with which everyone can obtain it, is certain of but a feeble

and fluctuating life. Neither do we advocate Pyrography solely as an amusement, although doubtless it will afford most charming pastime to many, but, as we have said before, as an art with limitless possibilities, capable of taking its place among the sister arts of Painting, Etching and Engraving, whilst above all these, it has very great advantages. It cannot be reproduced by machinery, and in admiring or criticising any specimen, we may be quite certain that it is as the artist's hand left it, and bears an impress of character and individuality attained by no purely mechanical method of working. Indeed, one of the greatest charms of Pyrographic work is its simple directness, which has all the freedom of a pen-and-ink drawing, allowing an expression, free and untrammelled, of the mind and brain of the artist, whilst it is capable of such refined treatment that we are told of one of Vandyke's portraits having been copied with most exquisite delicacy and faithfulness to the original. Apart from its value as a decorative agent, I would also call attention to Pyrography as offering a valuable link or transition stage between the very young art student's early efforts in freehand or pencil drawing, and his more advanced studies in the use of colours. There is scarcely any teacher of drawing and painting who has not experienced more or less, the not unnatural impatience of his pupil to paint pictures before he has honestly and conscientiously mastered the rudimentary knowledge of "*form*" that is necessary before he shall be able to combine it with "*colour*," in a manner at all likely to prove satisfactory.

This impatience generally leads to the pupil commencing a sketch in colour, which during its progress has to be so supplemented by touches put in by the master, that in the end it gives very inaccurate indication of the actual ability of the one to learn or of the other to teach, and although gratifying at the time to friends and relatives, will prove to have been most misleading, when (the master's help being unavailable) the pupil is left to his own resources. I am strongly of opinion that when the pupil arrives at the impatient and dissatisfied stage of his progress, the Pyrographic point will make a convenient diversion, and form a bridge between the pencil and the paint-box, being at once the means of keeping the student from undue haste in attaining to the latter and a most helpfully attractive adjunct to the former. Being able to concentrate his mind upon the delineation of form and light and shade in the picture, he has every chance of getting them correct and harmonious, and of being able to show something for his labour, infinitely superior to any painting in which the colouring is not of excellent quality. We have abundant proof that some of the greatest artists who have gone before, devoted considerable time and study to the manipulation of monotint, that being in most cases a warm brown or sepia, as the colour most useful and pleasing to the eye. In Pyrography we can approach so nearly to this warm sepia tint as to produce the same effect, with the advantage of a most durable material to work upon, and although it may hitherto have appeared to many as a coarse art — the fact doubtless of its having been done with pokers

helping to foster the idea—experience will prove that in the hand of an adept who has mastered the touch and knows what the point can do, the very reverse is the case and highly finished specimens show as much refinement and delicacy as an etching. Even in its most perfectly finished form, success in wood etching will be found much easier of achievement than in the ordinary etching on copper or zinc, because the result in the one is *direct*, while in the other it is, until after much practice, almost entirely speculative. The wood yields much more readily to the hot point than the metal does to the dry point, consequently much less pressure is required and much more freedom of line is obtained; moreover, the artist being able to see all the time how his work is progressing, is not liable to the usual disappointment of inexperienced etchers on copper, namely, that of finding only about half the richness of line and detail in his proof that had appeared to be on the metal, and a general appearance of feebleness and poverty in consequence. This is a most depressing but almost unfailing result of early attempts in etching, and it needs much determination, with a keen remembrance of what *has* been done in that particular branch of art, to keep one from despair at his apparently poor success.

In Pyrography the artist has to endure no such suspense either over successes or failures, and, when the slight mechanical difficulty has been overcome of managing the point and bellows, he will feel an ever increasing delight in the work with a certainty of success in the end if he does but persevere, and remember

“LABOR OMNIA VINCIT.”

CHAPTER II.

BEING intensely interested in the Pyrographic Art, and most anxious for its furtherance and development among cultivated and artistic people, I have been at some pains to select specimens for illustration which shew as much as possible the diversity of its application to useful as well as decorative articles, and although the examples given in the ancient and barbaric section are not all available for modern application, they may serve for hints to those desirous of adapting the art to household or domestic adornment generally.

I would remind the reader that we profess to give only slight and simple sketches of the specimens selected, as elaborately and highly finished drawings would have added considerably to the cost of the book, and put it beyond the reach of many, who might otherwise have profited by its teachings.

In the following illustrations, and from all we have been able to gather respecting them, it is noticeable that the burnt wood ornamentation is used only for peaceful and domestic articles, and not in any warlike or destructive weapons, the chief decoration of which appears to consist of carving and the heavy overlaying of metals.

PLATE I.

fig.1.

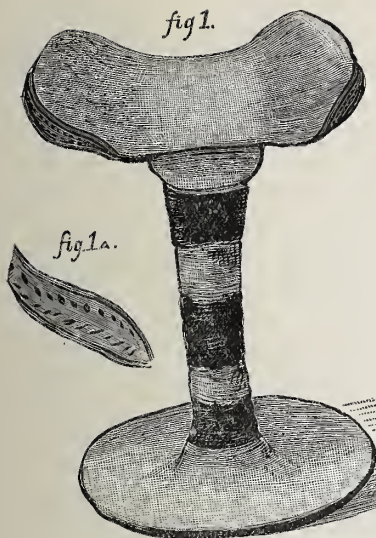


fig.2.

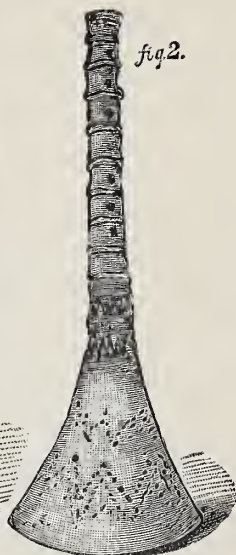


fig.3.

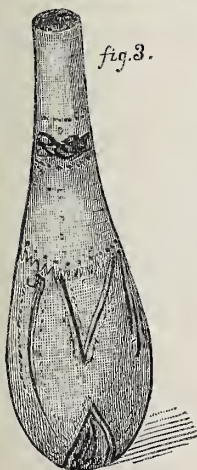


fig.4.



This in a way would argue that even in its elementary state Pyrography has been treated only as a light relaxation or amusement, being equivalent to the various fancy arts practised among European States.

PLATE I.

Fig. 1 is a curious specimen from Uguha, East Africa, in the form of a Wooden Pillow of about 8 inches in height.

The shaded portion of the upright part is burnt in the simplest manner. We give an enlarged drawing of part of it, from which it will be seen that the design takes the form of simple dot and line.

This specimen was presented to the British Museum by E. C. Hore, Esq., 1889, and gives an idea of a very early stage of the art as applied to decorative purposes.

Fig. 2 takes us a step further towards some idea of design, in its decoration. It represents a Wooden Horn or Trumpet from N. Asia, and gives evidence of some method, in the arrangements of the two toothed circles surrounding it at the beginning of its enlargement.

The holes are deeply burnt, as shown in the sketch, while the dots above the before-mentioned toothed circles, are much finer and fainter.

Fig. 3 is a Drinking Vessel of decidedly graceful form from Red Scar Point, New Guinea, the burnt part somewhat resembling the previous examples, and consisting of circumscribing lines, toothed lines and dots.

PLATE II.

fig.1

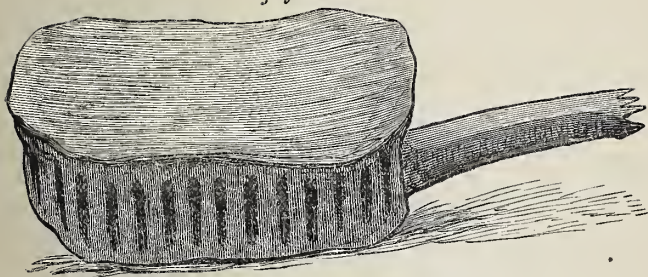


fig.2.



fig.3.

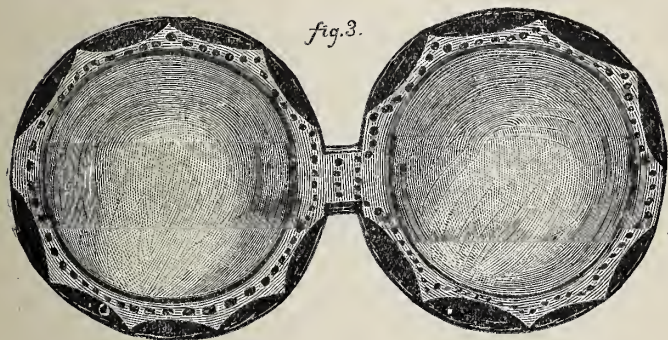


Fig. 4 is the upper part of a Spoon with screw-thread handle, and is about 12 inches in length. This example is not shown to advantage, our limited space necessitating its curtailment. The decorative form of the handle is produced by burning, and the edge of the bowl is scorched. From S. Africa.

PLATE II.

Fig. 1 is a quaintly suggestive article from E. Central Africa, and although used in peace, and as a seat of honour, bears fearful testimony in its name to the use to which it is applied. It is labelled "Chair to be used only by warriors who have killed an enemy," and offers a wide field for speculation as to the manners and customs of the people. The burnt part consists only, of a number of groves down its thickness or height.

The handle is 14 inches long, the diameters of seat 8 inches by 5.

Fig. 2 is quite a different manner of article, and takes our imagination to more peaceful scenes. It comes from New Guinea, and much resembles a Paper-knife, the design being by far the best we have yet seen. The arrangement of the curves by which to convey the idea of a fish being very good. The entire length is 9 inches, but the handle only is burnt.

Fig. 3 is a Double Bowl of massive appearance from W. Africa. It is 4 or 5 inches deep, and each bowl about 12 inches across, of hard, close wood, with the edges burnt in segments, as shown in the engraving, the dots being of somewhat irregular shape and size

PLATE III.

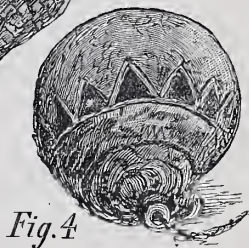
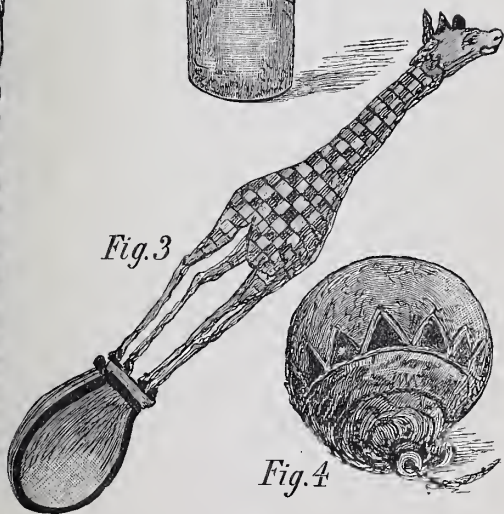


PLATE III.

Fig. 1—A Spoon from New Guinea, shown entire. The handle is burnt in simple bands, and the edge of the bowl treated as in the one previously illustrated (Plate I.), with no evidence of design. The diameter of the bowl is 3 inches.

Fig. 2 is a very fine specimen from Geelvinck Bay, New Guinea. An elaborate box to hold lime used for betel chewing. It was brought over by Her Majesty's ship "Rattlesnake," and presented to the Museum by A. W. Franks, Esq., the present keeper of the Ethnographical Department.

The ornamentation is of the Moorish style, and highly decorative though simple. Being of small size, 9 inches high, and 2 inches in diameter at the top, slightly tapering down, the many lines etched are, of necessity, very fine.

Fig. 3 is the last of our collection of New Guinea spoons, and the first specimen in which the art of Pyrography is combined with carving, the burning in this instance being a secondary matter. The neck lines and body of the animal are ornamented with a strange chequered design, the feet and actual bowl of the spoon being simply scorched. Total length about 12 inches.

Fig. 4 is our only example of New Zealand work, and shows a Float, the ground of which is a dull-red colour, apparently painted, the burnt part consisting of various lines of no particular pattern.

PLATE IV.

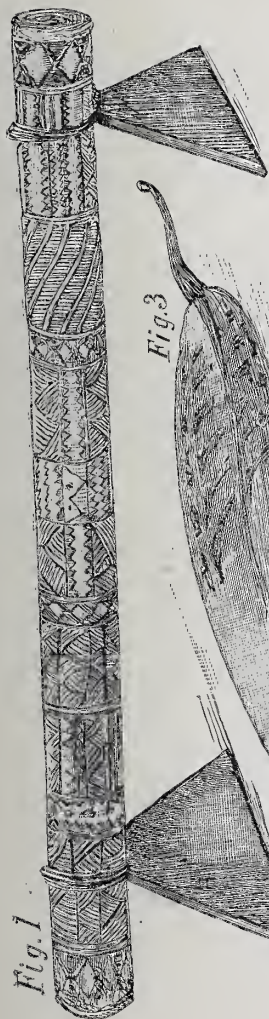


PLATE IV.

Fig 1.—A Native Pillow of bamboo, from the Fiji Islands, having a length of 30 inches and diameter 2 inches.

It came into our possession from Her Majesty's ship "Herald," and considered as the work of ostensibly savage tribes, it shows very considerable excellence with regard to decorative design.

Fig. 2 shows a portion of a larger Pillow of bamboo from New Guinea, drawn to a fuller scale. The actual object measures 36 inches in length and two and a half inches in diameter. The design appears to show an element of the barbaric and the grotesque, in the demon like arrangement of the centre part, and rude as at first sight it may appear, bears evidence of considerable skill in the manner of filling up the spaces.

Fig. 3 is a peculiar leaf-shaped Drinking Vessel, captured from Humbolt's Bay, New Guinea, wherein the etched part is sufficiently indicated to the reader.

PLATE V.

Fig. 1 is an Idol from the Admiralty Isles, about 6 inches in height, composed of a wood somewhat resembling oak. This specimen shows in the decoration of the face, a fitting progressive example of the style of ornament illustrated in fig. 2, Plate IV. The head only appears to be burnt, and exhibits in the arrangement of the lines, a considerable amount of design of an eccentric type.

PLATE V.



Fig. 1

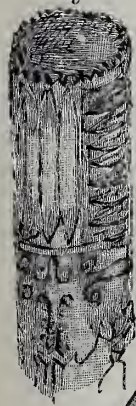


Fig. 2.



Fig. 3.



Fig. 4

Fig. 2 and 3 are portions of Betel Boxes from St. Chrystom. Solomon's Isles, and show a somewhat Egyptian form of decoration, noticeable in the leaf-like forms that encircle them in a lateral direction.

They were presented by Mr. Jessop, August, 1865.

The remaining figure (No. 4), a Calabash from New Guinea, shows so much taste in the arrangement and beauty of the curves, and in fineness of execution, as to be in itself sufficient proof that savages have borne artistic instincts.

We may judge from the foregoing illustrations, that Pyrography has been practised by half-civilised people, more because it presented a simple rough-and-ready, as well as a lasting means of conveying their ideas in ornamentation, than from any preference for it on account of its possessing qualities not obtainable by other means. We should imagine the instruments used to have been somewhat like ordinary skewers, the lines in some of the New Guinea specimens being so fine, that they must of necessity have been made with something more pointed even than an ordinary lead pencil. In going through the Museum there was considerable difficulty in distinguishing between some of the articles that were burnt, and others having a slight surface-carving, darkened by age to somewhat resemble them. In all cases there seemed to be no attempt at softness of effect, the design being a combination of dots and lines, the only beauty of which consisted in the manner of their arrangement.

In England very little thought has been given to the art until within the last few years, but we have found sufficient to indicate that a few people who may in their time have been termed eccentric, entertained some floating ideas that there might be something in it, which ideas they have embodied in various quaint attempts at Pyrographic decoration. Some rough and ready proofs of this may be found in the altar pieces of various old English Churches in which the figures have been traced on the wood and the background burnt away with a large hot tool, thus leaving the figures in relief. These examples are some centuries old, we cannot give the precise date.

Doubtless many interesting examples might be discovered, but as I before remarked it is not my purpose to give the past history of the art, I shall therefore proceed in the next chapter with simple instructions in modern Pyrography with the Vulcan Machine.



CHAPTER III.

I SHALL begin by giving a full and complete description of all the materials required for a Pyrographic outfit, and inasmuch as it is a common error in writing upon any particular subject, to pre suppose that the reader knows more than he actually does, and so to confuse him with technicalities and allusions which he does not understand ; I shall take an exactly opposite course, and at the risk of seeming too prolix, shall explain every part to the minutest detail, taking it for granted that the reader knows nothing at all about it, beyond what has been written in my two previous chapters.

All the materials required may be placed under three heads. The tools with which to work ; the benzoline to supply heat, and the wood or other substance upon which to carry out the design ; and it is upon the excellence of these materials that much of the success in Pyrography depends.

As a first step, the intending student must purchase a set of tools, and of these, no cheaper and better selection can be obtained than that comprised in the " Vulcan " burnt wood etching machine of Messrs. Abbott Brothers, Southall.

A neat box about 9 inches long, 6 inches wide, and 5 inches deep, contains all that the beginner requires,

price 8s. 6d. to 16s., and if, as the artist attains greater proficiency, he requires a greater variety of implements for fanciful or more ambitious work, some very useful accessories can be purchased at a moderate price.

All absolutely necessary articles will be found in the "Vulcan" box; the platinum "point" or pencil and the metal holder for it, bottles for benzoline, indiarubber bellows, and tubing, and several other articles, the use of which shall be explained. Any of them can be purchased separately, the only expensive one being the platinum point, which being the most important item in the selection, shall take precedence in my description.

Platinum is, as most people know, one of the perfect metals, upon which no single acid has any effect. It is most expensive, costing at the present time about 90s. per oz., but it is the only metal suitable for the Pyrographic point because it possesses the unique property of taking up and absorbing the benzoline gas used to obtain the heat, and, as it were, feeding upon the vapour conveyed to the point by the indiarubber bellows. The point supplied with the "Vulcan" is of pure platinum, and, although it appears costly, it will outlast 2 or 3 cheaper ones in which there is any admixture of other metals.

On Plate 6 is given an illustration of the anatomy of the point and the various shapes in which it can be obtained of the manufacturers.

The figure No. 5 on the plate shows that the interior arrangement consists of a small platinum sheath, par-

tially enclosing a fine coiled platinum wire, which, extending some way beyond it, is again enclosed by the outer and larger sheath of the same metal. This outer sheath is the "point" from which the heat is conveyed direct in the wood.

On the end opposite to the platinum is a small screw with a milled ridge at the base of it. This screw fits into the end of the cork handle, and it must be most emphatically borne in mind, that should the point become too tightly screwed into the socket for the fingers to remove it, the pincers must be applied to the milled ridge *only*, as their use upon the platinum part (that metal being somewhat soft) would undoubtedly result in its destruction. Of course, the point being the only part of the apparatus that comes directly in contact with the wood, it is absolutely necessary that it should be of most convenient form to suit the artist's taste, as well as the various effects and touches.

The shapes are all shown in the illustration, but not wishing to leave the reader in ignorance of any one particular connected with them, I will briefly mention their distinctive capabilities.

Fig. 1.—The simplest form of point is for somewhat fine work, and also to be used where a clean line is required; being cylindrical in shape, it is not convenient for shading or broad work generally.

Fig. 2 is of broader make and more spadiform shape, it is to be used in a less vertical manner than No. 1, and will be found convenient for covering larger surfaces,

PLATE VI.

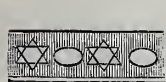


FIG.16.



FIG.13.

FIG.1.



FIG.3.



FIG.2.



FIG.9.



FIG.11.



FIG.4.



FIG.10.



FIG.5.



FIG.12.



FIG.6.



FIG.7.



FIG.8.

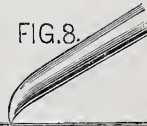


FIG.14.



FIG.15.

but by using it on its edge a very good line can be obtained. This is the point that will be found most generally useful where only one is purchased, as several varieties of touch can be obtained by it. In ordering a "Vulcan" machine, the shape of the point required should be specified.

Fig. 3 is the largest point made, being specially adapted for large and bold work.

Fig. 4 is a curved background point, considered by some to be of great excellence. It will make very thin lines or dots where great fineness and regularity are required, inasmuch as but a very small surface of it touches the wood, and also the flattened part being not so near the surface of the wood, it is not liable to scorch or "ghost" in a way to injure the work. It does not hide the work while in use so much as the straight shapes, and when used with the convex side downwards, will give some very good broad touches.

I have pointed out all these advantages in justice to the curved point, which is much upheld by its admirers; but personally have found that for what may be termed general all round service, Fig. 2 is the best. Figs. 6, 7 and 8, give an illustration of the different manners of holding the two points, Figs. 2 and 4.

There is another recently invented point not included in the illustration, as it takes the form of an accessory rather than a necessity. This is somewhat in the shape of Fig. 1, but has an aperture at the pointed end,

through which the hot air escapes, and being held over the wood gives tone or shade to the work, this is called a "scorching point."

There are also some attachments or "pattern touches" as they are termed, small hollow tubes fashioned at one end to fit on to points Nos. 1 and 4, and at the other end shaped to give the separate figures as shown in the same plate. These will be found particularly convenient for borders as they obviate the necessity of pencil outlines and much measuring to obtain accuracy.

In concluding my remarks upon the "point," I would impress most forcibly upon the reader the fact that platinum, of which a considerable part of it is composed, is almost as valuable as gold, and should therefore be treated in a manner suitable to its rank among metals.

If it get out of order, or, as the expression goes, "refuses to act," intense heat should be applied by holding it in the lamp for some time and blowing somewhat forcibly with the bellows. If this fail to effect a cure, it is almost certain that too inquisitive fingers have been interfering with its mechanism, and the safest and best remedy is to send it to the manufacturers, who will repair it at a small cost, any interference by unskilful hands being sure to lead to failure. Should it become encrusted with potash from working upon a soft wood, in such a manner that heat does not remove it, the extreme point only may be dipped in warm nitric

acid, when the corrosion will soon disappear. Care must be taken that the acid is not brought in contact with the brass fitting of the point, on which it would act in a most destructive manner, and the platinum must never, whilst hot, be brought in contact with lead or zinc, as the two metals will amalgamate, and the point be destroyed.

In ordinary use the point will last a considerable time without apparent deterioration. The first sign of "over work" being the appearance of small perforations on those parts of its surface that have had most friction upon the wood. It may then be made useful for a certain kind of work, to be hereafter described, but if not required for that purpose, it can be returned to the manufacturers, who will deduct the value of the platinum from the cost of a new one.

THE HANDLE.

The handle supplied with the "Vulcan" machine, weights $1\frac{1}{2}$ ounces, it is a metal tube about 6 inches long, with a screw hole at each end, and surrounded by a surface covering of cork.

This covering was previously made of wood, but cork has been substituted as being a better non-conductor of heat and lighter to hold.

THE BOTTLES.

Two of these are supplied; one will be required to hold the benzoline while at work, the other will be found useful for a reserve supply, as, being stoppered, it does

not permit unnecessary evaporation, and being made to fit into the box, it can be put away with the other parts of the apparatus, out of the reach of the too meddlesome and inquisitive young folks.

THE METAL JUNCTION.

This is a hollow tubular arrangement which has two smaller tubes branching from it. Round the body of this junction a cork collar is placed, by means of which it fits tightly into the neck of the benzoline bottle. There is an improved junction supplied by the makers, when ordered, with a neat arrangement attached, which by the raising or lowering of a small metal arm regulates the flow of air or gas into the tube, thus obviating any difficulty with the quality of the benzoline, which varies considerably. These regulators are 2s. each.

This brings us to the

INDIARUBBER BELLOWS,

to which a piece of tubing is fixed at one end ; there is also an odd piece of tubing not at present fastened to anything. If the piece of tubing attached to the bellows be pinched tightly in the thumb and finger, and the smaller ball in the bellows be pressed two or three times, it will be found that the ball surrounded by netting has become inflated with air, which escapes with a puff from the end of the tubing when the pressure of the thumb and finger is removed. It is therefore evident that if the free end of the tube be fastened on to one of the metal forks of the junction and the other fork stopped,

the air will find its way into the bottle as long as there is room for it. If, however, instead of stopping the other metal fork we fasten an end of the loose piece of tubing securely on to it, the air, which cannot find room in the bottle, will find its way down the tube. We next fasten one end of the cork handle on to the free end of the tubing, and the other end screw tightly into the platinum point, thus driving the air right into the point, from which it only escapes, after being burned, from a small hole drilled in the side. It will be easily understood, that if the bottle be three-parts filled with benzoline, which is of a most volatile nature, the air driven into the bottle by the bellows mixes with and drives out the gas given off by the benzoline. This escapes down the tubing into the point, and by its inflammable properties feeds and keeps up the heat there.

THE SPIRIT LAMP.

This should be used with methylated spirit *only*, and is necessary for heating the point in the first instance. When it is once red hot the lamp can be extinguished, and will not be required again, unless from some accident the point is allowed to get cold.

BENZOLINE.

The ordinary quality, purchased at an oil shop for about 3d. per pint, has been found best for the purpose.

Should it not possess sufficient evaporating power, an increased amount of heat can be obtained by putting

pieces of cotton wool or lamp wick into the bottle, so that points of it rise mountain-like out of the fluid, this will give a larger evaporating surface.

It is well to remind the reader that the benzoline is highly inflammable, and therefore must not be tampered with. Under ordinary circumstances there is absolutely no danger in the use of it, but upsetting the bottle near a fire or lamp might result in a serious accident. The small brass funnel is supplied with each set of tools as a preventive of spilling, when pouring the liquid from one vessel to another.

WOODS FOR BURNING.

This is a subject to which the really *serious* student of Pyrography cannot devote too much attention, if he contemplates a piece of work that is likely to be of some value when completed. The reader will see the truth of this when he remembers that it is absolutely the *ground* upon which his work will appear, and quite a different matter to the stretched canvas for oil painting, in which the poor quality will in a measure be hidden by the successive coatings of paint. In Pyrographic work, if the wood be unsuitable for the purpose, every stroke will be a failure, and if it be the right kind of wood but unsound, the artists' labour will be so much waste of time.

It is therefore absolutely necessary that the wood be sound, free from knots and well seasoned, particularly the latter, for if it be at all green, the heat of the point will cause its contraction on one side, thus giving the

picture a boat shaped appearance, with the chance of its splitting down the centre if an attempt be made to straighten it.

If a board should begin to curve from unequal drying, the best remedy is to put it at an early stage into a narrow grooved frame, which will keep it flat, and in course of time it will dry all through.

The woods most generally useful for Pyrography, are oak, elm, ash, holly, lime, sycamore, chestnut, cedar, teak, aspen poplar, tulip, and the wood from Assam tea chests. American white wood presents a very good surface for burning, but it is so eccentric in its grain, and the variations of its colour from the different distributions of sap in its constitution, that it is not to be recommended for large or important work. It answers well for beginners to practise upon for a general knowledge of touch, and also for small fancy work upon which it is not intended to spend much labour.

Holly, Sycamore and Lime, all primary homogenous woods, are most excellent for Pyrographic work, large or small, but are best fitted for situations unaffected by weather, and where great delicacy of appearance is required—drawing-rooms, boudoirs, etc.

Oak and Ash are solid, useful woods for large spaces, but not fanciful.

Teak is a close, hard wood of good colour, but I have had but a limited experience of the effect of burning upon it.

Cedar, Tulip and Yew are what might be termed coloured woods, and prove highly suitable for inlaid work combined with Pyrography, especially in the way of borders.

The wood of Assam tea chests is one of the finest for Pyrographic work in which a clear line is required, especially for outline drawing. It can be obtained of most large tea dealers, but there is generally some difficulty in getting a perfect piece of any size, as it is nearly always more or less "shaky." When, however, a good sample can be obtained, it will well repay the artist's trouble.

Plate 7 gives an idea of the relative colours of different woods, and the effect of the Pyrographic touches upon them.

I originally contemplated on this plate giving the *grains* of the wood also, that the student might judge for himself as to their suitability for his purpose, but it was found that, in the drawings, the mixture of the grain with the touches would be confusing rather than helpful. I have therefore omitted the grain entirely, and only show the different effects upon the wood produced by the Pyrographic point. It will be noticed that although holly is the lightest wood, being but few tones darker than ordinary drawing paper, the burning upon it shows almost as dark as upon oak.

Bone and ivory form very delicate grounds for Pyrography in small work, but owing to their being of much closer texture than wood, the lines appear considerably

finer, and not unlike the marks on some of my African specimens. The tint obtained is a fine rich brown. Velvet also is a most satisfactory material to work upon, burning away the pile, but of course exercising judgment in the amount of heat used, it being necessary to leave the ground work of the material unscorched.

The velvet should be fastened by the edges to a board so that it will not "ruck" during the work and the pattern traced through ordinary transfer paper, which can be obtained in several colours, blue, orange, white, or black. The hand must be held *over* not *on* the velvet while marking the outline, as the pressure would cause the colour to come off in the wrong place and ruin the entire surface.

Some good effects can also be obtained on leather, but many people object to the very unpleasant odour which arises when heat is applied to the surface.

Perhaps the most pleasant and fascinating of all forms of Poker work is burning upon glass. Here we have no smell, no smoke, and a delightful result of our labours.

It is easily understood that a much greater heat is required than for burning ordinary surfaces, and for the purpose a special point may be obtained, which can be brought by the bellows to an almost white heat.

The glass should be quite clean, and free from flaws, and rather larger than the design, as burning on the extreme edge of the glass sometimes causes it to split. It can be cut to size when finished.

PLATE VII.



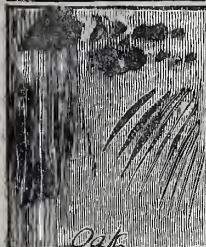
White Deal



Pine



Kauri Pine



Oak



Elm



Ash



Lime



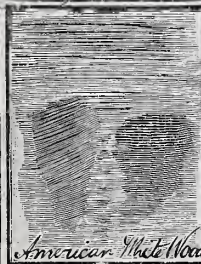
Lycamore



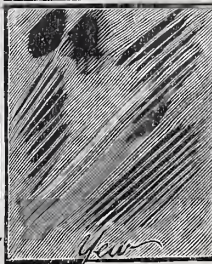
Holly



Tulip



American White Wood



Yew

The pattern can be placed under the glass and traced over with a smooth firm pressure. It is better to have a piece of paper or cardboard for the hand to rest on while at work. When finished, it may be left with the little frost work of burnt glass on the edge of the lines, or it can be scraped clean with a sharp tool. The lines may be filled in with gold paint or enamel, when the work will appear to stand out in relief on the wrong side. A little ingenuity will suggest endless devices for varying the work and in nearly all cases the effect will be good. The special glass point should on no account be used on any other material which would be liable to injure it, and render it unfit for its own particular purpose.



CHAPTER IV.

WE will imagine that the student has the full Vulcan apparatus before him, each article corresponding to the written description. The bottle must be about three-parts full of benzoline and the metal junction fixed firmly into the neck so as to allow of no escape of gas. On one arm of the junction will be fixed the indiarubber tubing which carries the bellows, and on the other that loose piece to the other end of which shall be attached the cork handle and platinum point.

The spirit lamp being lighted everything is ready. The small panels supplied with the Vulcan do excellently to practise upon.

The operator must now take the cork handle, pencil wise in his right hand, and hold the platinum point in the flame of the lamp for two or three minutes, a new point with the burnish on may require to be held a trifle longer. He will then take the bellows in his left hand and compress it, driving the benzoline gas from the bottle along the tubing into the point, which will quickly become of a glowing red heat, and will continue so, while the pressure on the bellows is maintained. The lamp can now be extinguished, but it must be remembered that the point will "go out" also, if the bellows be neglected, therefore no matter what the right hand find

to do, the left hand must attend to the blowing; and if the point be put down, care must be taken to place it in such a position as not to injure anything by contact.

Having to work the inflator all the time, may at first appear a hindrance to the work, in the same manner that blowing for oneself on the harmonium sends all the notes wrong until one gets accustomed to it; and the student will feel strongly tempted to engage the services of a "blower." I would, however, advise his not doing so; the first slight awkwardness of working the two hands differently being overcome, he will find that they work much more intelligently together than would be possible if they were not guided by the same brain; a little practice will prove this satisfactorily, and the result be quite worth the time so spent. The student having the glowing point in his right hand, the inflator of the bellows in his left, and a trial piece of wood before him will now begin his trial strokes, and will be almost certain to find that each one begins or ends with a Dot. This Dot is the unfailing enemy of the Pyrographic student in his first efforts, and arises simply from his unconsciously resting his point on the wood at the beginning and end of his stroke.

The Dot is really *the* difficulty in Pyrography, and nothing but practice is required to overcome it. I would lay particular stress on this, as so many beginners appear discouraged at finding their first efforts comparative failures, but it always comes right in the end.

The stroke should be put on with a sweeping motion with no halt at any part of it, and I would advise the

artist practising this only, until he is able to make a clean line of any length in any direction. Next should follow curves in all directions, until great freedom of hand in the use of the point has been obtained.

Of course a previous knowledge of pencil drawing in all its branches will render much of this unnecessary, but it is most important in Pyrography that the artist put his touches, lines, or curves with confidence, as hesitation or blundering at a critical moment may spoil an otherwise successful work.

It is almost impossible to give the amateur any definite instructions as to the actual manner of holding the point, beyond the one unfailing rule, that if he grasp the handle too low down, he will be reminded in a startling manner that he is "writing with fire."

It is safe to say, that any way in which he can obtain exactly the effect required, is the right way, and only by practice will he become master of all the "manœuvring" of which the point is capable. There is, however, one thing to be borne in mind, namely, that if the little escape hole before alluded to, be held downwards whilst at work, the hot air rushing out will scorch the wood, and take from the sharp appearance of the lines. which in some cases has an injurious effect upon the work.

It is also noticeable that the two sides of the point do not work equally, so that by altering their positions different directions of line can be obtained, and at the risk of being laughed at, I would say, that the point

seems to work better if changed occasionally from one side to the other, almost as if it had gathered fresh power after a short rest from its labour.

The light in working should be fairly strong, and coming from the left, so that no shadow is cast upon the work, and as gaslight does as well as daylight, Pyrography can be made a pleasant winter occupation. This will be especially appreciated by a large number of persons who are engaged during the day, and need some amusing but not fatiguing relaxation for the evenings at home. The skilled artizan would find his exact, mechanical training, of great help to him in the more conventional and geometrical branches of the art.

Plate 8 shows an exercise in various "touches" which the artist would do well to copy as nearly as possible with the point. He will be able, after some practice, to do so without any difficulty, as they are all fac-similes of touches originally burnt upon the wood. The upper half of the Plate needs no description, being simply dots and lines of different intensity and at different angles, curved lines, gradated lines and a few of the most important "pattern touches" before described.

At the top of the lower portion, in the centre, is a suggestion of a leaf, which, though comparatively light in tone, shows dark against a still lighter back-ground. The seven rectangular diagrams below it, show the effect of a certain amount of tone differently distributed; the palest in the long column-like figure, increasing in tone in exact ratio as it decreases in size to the smallest

PLATE VIII.



figure on the left-hand side. The lines of dots on the right-hand show a gradation from the deepest to the palest tones on surfaces of the same area.

The next figure gives a tone obtained by very minute dots and lines, and the last four figures show an increasing depth of tone obtained by crossed lines of very slightly differing intensity.

The careful reproduction of this page with the point will form a splendid exercise in Tone and Touch, from which the student will obtain immense benefit for his later work.

For a first attempt at combining the useful with the instructive in Pyrography, marking out and decorating a draught-board will be found most profitable and satisfactory. Any combination of light and dark touches will answer for the purpose; indeed, no two squares need be alike so long as the proper distinction in their depths be equally carried out all through. The border can be made with one of the pattern touches, or two or three in combination, unless it be preferred plain, with simply a double dark line to finish the edge. Of course it will be advisable to rule out the squares before burning.

Having to a certain extent become master of the point some more decorative and interesting work may be attempted; and here we have such a wide field of subjects to choose from, that nothing but the artist's own particular bent or fancy, will be of any service in a decision.

Flowers and foliage will doubtless have a special attraction for ladies, and may be used with charming effect on many articles, useful and ornamental.

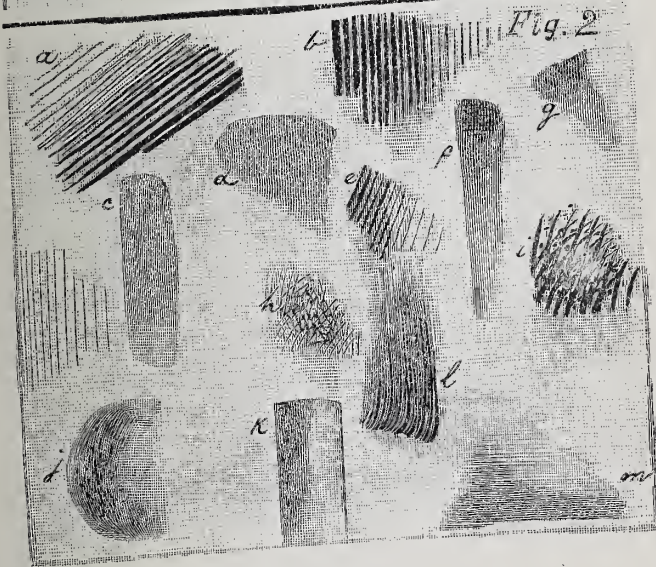
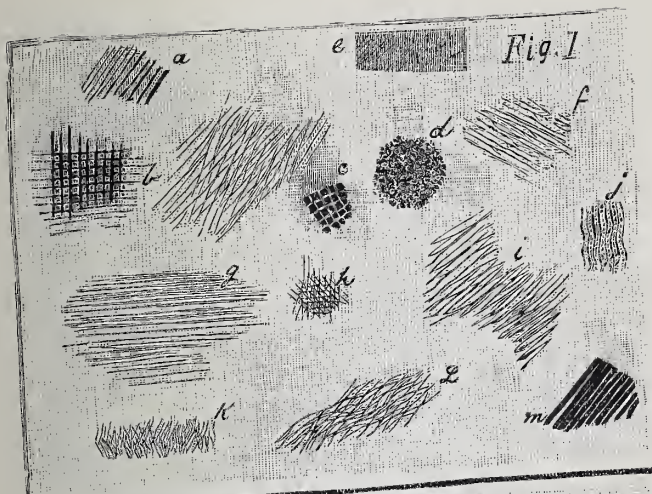
Large, bold subjects, such as Lilies, Irises, Sunflowers, Daffodils and Marguerites are the best to choose from in the floral world, while for foliage only, Oak sprays, Blackberry, Laurel, Vine and Virginia creeper are very adaptable; in fact, the work of reproducing in Pyrography is much simplified when such subjects are chosen, as have very distinctive shapes and outlines.

In all flower drawing it is advisable that the artist first gets the outline correctly in pencil, before commencing with the point, as a mistake in the burning would be fatal in anything so fine and delicate as the petal of a flower, where the utmost softness and purity are required.

A pale, fine-grained wood, such as Holly or Sycamore, should be chosen, any little roughness removed with sand-paper (No. 0 and 1 are the most useful sizes) and the dust carefully wiped off. The outline should then be carefully pencilled in, and the artist must decide whether he will leave the background, and let his design show dark against it, or darken the background, leaving the flower in lighter tones upon it. This is of some importance, as if he decide upon the latter course, he must draw his stalks or branches in double outline, so that each line becomes part of the background when he fills it in, otherwise all the stalk will be merged in the background.

Light upon dark is perhaps the most effective method, although greater care is required in shading the flower, there not being so many touches among which to cover a mistake ; our enemy the Dot, for instance, would show with glaring distinctness on the white petal of an Arum Lily treated in this manner, but would be much less noticeable if the other method were adopted. The background will also require to be done with great care and patience, so as to obtain an even tone over the entire surface ; indeed, it often happens that the background takes nine-tenths of the time. Some people have a particular taste for background burning, and where one does not grudge the time it certainly gives great finish to the picture. Plate 9, figure 1, gives an indication of varied directions of line and other touches suitable for backgrounds, the simplest and quickest being that from right to left downwards, as in writing, A in plate. Next would come lateral lines only, as in G ; this is a good background to relieve portraits. D is the well-known mixture of lines and dots so frequently seen in engravings. B is composed of lateral and vertical lines, and is a good background for objects drawn on a large scale. Doubtless by experimenting, many more varieties may be added to what is here shown, but sufficient is given to indicate that by the simplest touches in combination, numberless tones may be obtained to relieve the work ; it must, however, be remembered in all cases, that the background should be kept subservient to the main design, and not chosen so as to give a broken-up appearance to the whole, or worry the eye in contemplating it. For a group of

PLATE IX.



flowers, those marked E or K would be very effective, of course making it darker in tone if preferred. E being tone and fine line combined, K "hatched" lines only. For the flower itself the point should be of a moderate heat, that is, barely red-hot, as it is not requisite that any of its lines be very dark, and an ugly black line would be a great disfigurement. For the background it may be used hotter, and should be very hot if the artist desire to burn away part of the surface so as to leave the flower in low relief; this may often be done with a very good effect.

The foregoing remarks apply equally to flowers or foliage, when treated in a natural manner, of their conventional treatment more will be said hereafter.

PORTRAITS.—This is a branch of Pyrography which can be most successfully carried out, and offers so many advantages to the student that it is worth while giving some little time to its consideration. The copying and enlarging of Photographs of dead or absent friends, copying Oil Paintings, and Portraits from Life, can all be brought to great perfection; the artist not having to vex his spirit with the exact colour of hair, eyes or complexion, can produce a splendid life-sized likeness from a good Photograph, without ever having seen the original. Any particularly picturesque head from an engraving, life-sized heads of celebrities, aged heads with many wrinkles and strongly-marked features, are all good subjects for the point, and will give grand results for the time spent upon them. A most striking and brilliant effect can be obtained by drawing a massive head

in light tones on the wood, and projecting it by a deep, rich-toned background; heads from medallions or antique coins look particularly well for this purpose. We need scarcely point out the absolute necessity of being able to draw rounded and shaded objects with accuracy before attempting such an advanced subject as Portrait drawing. Those who have been through the Elementary Course under the Science and Art Department, will be at no loss in this particular; for others we would recommend one or two simple studies in Light and Shade from rounded objects, a plaster of Paris globe or an apple, one under an effect of ordinary light and one by artificial light.

I have suggested the economy of line suitable for obtaining roundness and gradation on Plate 9, fig 2. Some of the touches will be found most useful in drawing faces, as curves play a very important part in all portraits. Figures J, K and M give unlined toned work, and are somewhat equivalent to a piece of shading done with the stump. To effect this, it will be found generally necessary to hold the point so as to touch with as much of its surface as possible. It will be good exercise to copy this page with the point, on a much larger scale.

The wood for Portraits should be smooth and of fine grain, with no suspicion of a knot in any part that can disfigure the hands or face. All the main lines should first be put in with a pencil, care being taken to place the head well on the board.

Of course much depends in the size of the Portrait, but sufficient margin should be left all round to prevent a bald, overbalanced appearance when finished. The face should always be kept the lightest part, but when working on a light wood, very little should be left untouched by the point, or it will have a patchy effect.

Practice in rounded surfaces with the pencil, will have given some idea of the best lines with which to give solidity to the forehead and cheeks, and stippling with a very cool point for the lightest part will prevent a strained, leatherly appearance. The corners of the mouth must be treated with the very greatest tenderness and care, as the addition of the touch will alter the entire expression of a face; great attention must also be given to the outward curve of the upper lip. The finishing of the eyes should be left till last, that being, in a way, the part that gives life, light and intellect to the face, but it cannot be satisfactorily accomplished whilst the rest of the face is in a crude state. The hair is best treated simply, and in masses, as in sculpture, the observance of too much detail being apt to give a wiry appearance. Dress should be broadly treated observing the best direction of line for giving the texture of the material, but not working it up sufficiently to detract from the face, which should of course, be the most important part of the picture.

Portraits of celebrities for public buildings, institutes, etc. executed in this manner are most appropriate, and although not so valuable as good portraits in oil, are

immeasurably superior to the ordinary cheap colored work. The study of Rembrandt's portraits will be found a most useful aid to Pyrographic portraiture. Heads of Animals boldly executed in life size, are highly suitable for halls or staircases. Wolves, Dogs, Bears, Stags, and many animals in which the colour as well as form can be produced being most effective; rough shaggy heads with long hair are especially good subjects.

FIGURE DRAWING IN PYROGRAPHY.—This is a branch of the art which should in a manner of speaking, be classified with portraiture; but it can also be made most decorative and applicable where no actual likeness is intended or required, as in panels for the decoration of halls, mantelpieces, shutters and doors. Copying from the antique will here be found most helpful, as, knowing he cannot easily erase his errors as in pencil or sturuping, the student will concentrate his mind upon what is before him, and from the intensity of his labours will rapidly improve.

LANDSCAPE.—This is a phase of Pyrographic Art in which I have intense interest, and it is hoped that many who read this book may share in my opinion, that the reproduction of nature's beauties is a most absorbing and fascinating occupation.

With the "Point" most exquisite pictures in one colour may be painted, anyone who loves etching, pen and ink or sepia drawings will be charmed with them. I would advise the beginner in landscape drawing to make a series of pen and ink sketches from nature, giving great attention to the main lines, and adding detail according to the time at his disposal; above all, he

should store his mind with regard to natural facts to be depicted, or even make small pencil notes on the sketch, which could afterwards be fully carried out on the wood. A view should be chosen most suitable to the shape he wishes to fill, and not wider than the eye can conveniently take in. The first should be merely a simple study, with not too much foreground, or the artist will not know how to dispose of it, and will most likely get weary and disgusted, when he feels it in any way beyond his power. A few separate studies of large foreground leafage, carefully carried out will give a most decided grasp of the treatment of foregrounds, and will be very beneficial to the amateur. There must not be too much thin detail in the sketch, particularly light foliage in front of massive forms, such as birch trees, which will be found too spotty ; in fact, unspotty subjects should always be chosen.

Trees without foliage will repay careful work, and at the end of March or beginning of April studies of their anatomy could be made. Tree trunks also, on a grand scale, with a large foliage of Burdocks, etc., at foot, are of great service in Pyrography ; and for these, the study of Albert Durer's engravings will be found good.

Clusters of old cottages, with their various angles of roof line, have always a picturesque appearance (see frontispiece) ; also old streets and hostleries will well repay the artist's labour, but new buildings having a particularly trim and neat appearance, should be avoided as unsuitable. Vehicles with wheels also are better left out, as it requires considerable skill with the point to manage them correctly, and in the rendering of a coach or

carriage where all the lines must be sharp and true, a mistake will show much more plainly than in the roofs of old cottages or a broken wall.

THE SKY.—It will be seen that the judicious rendering of this part of the landscape is of considerable importance it being as a rule, by far the lightest portion of the picture, and the utmost tenderness and delicacy should be given to it, most beginners get the sky too dark, and thereby throw out the “values” of the whole subject. This can be retrieved in a measure by the judicious use of glasspaper, but it should never be relied on as an excuse for careless execution. With care and skill most beautiful tones can be obtained by the Pyrographic process, without the faintest symptoms of charring in the most night-like or stormy effects. The whole landscape should, as a rule, be kept in mezzotint, with only a small surface very light, and that gradated, but at the same time, I may remark that there is equally great value in leaving the white. These may appear antagonistic statements, but are not so, and in a fully carried out Pyrographic sketch, a very small portion of the white will give light to the picture and value to the rest of the tones.

The subject of tone is truly, with regard to natural treatment, an all important matter. The artist should now and then put his work from him, and stand some distance off to get the general effect. If he think it needs strengthening, a few dark touches, put with confidence, will give what is required, but very little should be absolutely black or deepest brown. Pure black, either in Pyrography or Painting, should be most cautiously and sparingly used, its chief value being to show

off other colours. In fact, the very greatest thing in Pyrographic landscape (after correctness of drawing), is to put as much gradated middle tint as possible into the picture; there should be positively not a quarter of an inch over its whole surface of exactly the same tone; thus light and atmosphere will irradiate it.

There is no better study than the sky itself, if one wants lessons in gradation always to his hand, every bit of cloud teaches it, and even the greyest November sky bears witness to the many notes in Nature's harmony of colour.

Figures in landscape should be but few, and not worked up in such a manner as to detract from the general effect of the picture, unless of course it be professedly a figure subject. If the figure is to give some motive or story to the picture it can receive greater care but judgment must direct the artist in this particular.

CONVENTIONAL DESIGN.—By this is meant the arbitrary, and decorative treatment, of objects natural or otherwise, and many people are of opinion that this is a branch of art which is more suitable than any other to Pyrographic work. It may be only because they have not seen the natural treatment sufficiently carried out, or else because the bent of their minds inclines them for this manner of decoration in preference to any other.

It is, therefore, quite impossible to say which is most to be recommended, natural or conventional treatment, and the individual taste of the artist must decide the question; but a broad distinction must always be kept between the two, their combination being utterly false.

PLATE X.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

and against the laws of Art. In natural objects, the leaves of oak, laurel and vine will be an endless source of design; pendant fruit, with birds, make a further variety, the wings of the latter being often very beautiful in their outline, and the contemplation of the manner in which the Acanthus leaf has been treated in classic ages, as an adornment of Architecture, will suggest a variety of graceful and growing curvature.

In translating or altering the natural appearance of foliage to that of decorative treatment, it is of the utmost importance to fully master the size and shape of the surface to be covered, and to consider the suitability of the objects to the spaces they are to fill.

With regard solely to this part of the subject, much may be learned by studying Japanese decorative work, for although almost infantile in their preception of some divisions of Art, they are unrivalled in the power with which they distribute their ornament over given surfaces. It should also be remembered that horizontal and vertical surfaces require totally different patterns for their decoration, the horizontal, which will be looked down upon, should be treated more simply and geometrically, but any good work on ornament will clearly show what is required in both cases.

When intended for what may be termed "fixtures," that is, panels, doors, mantelpieces, wainscots, etc., and to be put in a position where the light upon it will be of feeble intensity, the work should be left rather light in tone, as a great difference will be apparent according to the quality of the light upon it, and the way it catches the grain, in fact almost as much as in painting.

PLATE XI.

fig. 6



fig. 1

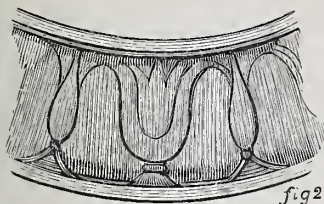


fig. 2



fig. 3

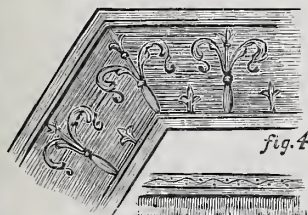


fig. 4

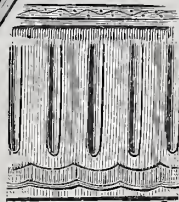


fig. 5

fig. 7

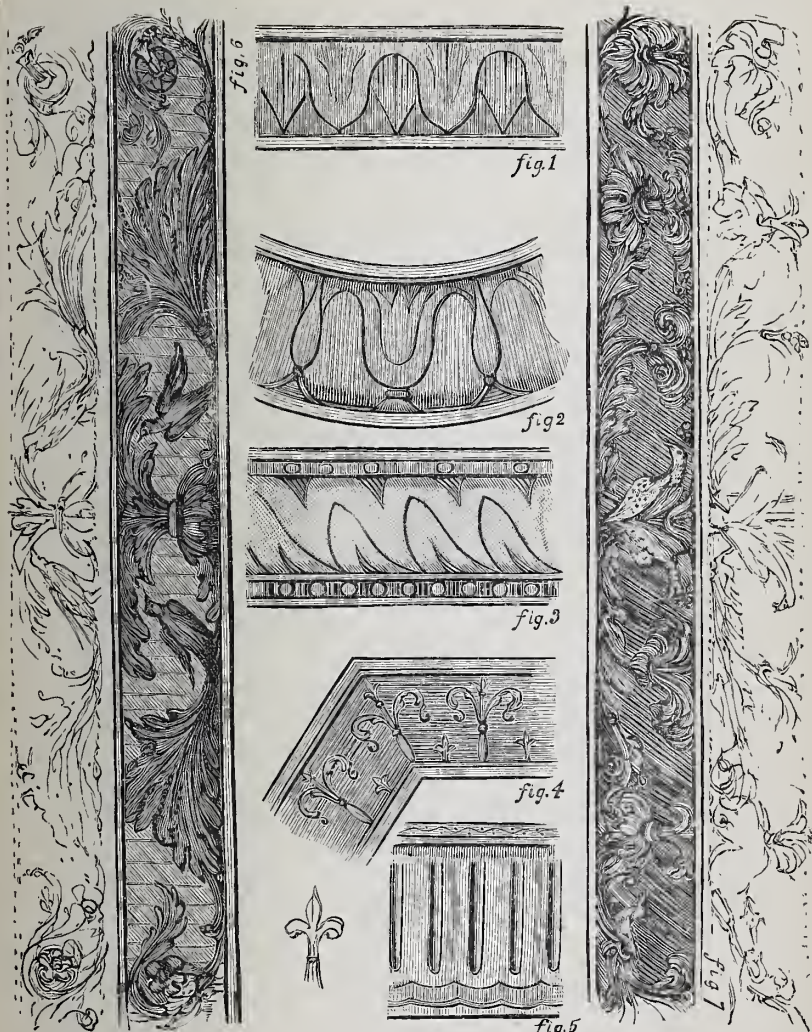


Plate 10 gives an idea of the natural and conventional treatment of foliage, the first being a spray of laurel drawn naturally, and therefore to a certain extent freely, (with scarcely two leaves alike in shape) as nature shows it. The second represents a spray treated in a more severe manner.

We here lose the ruggedness and variety of line shown in the first figure, and obtain a more clearly central piece with sides supporting, these latter slightly varied. Bunches of grapes on the vine form another most excellent subject for conventional and natural treatment, further exemplifying the beauty of curves, and with some diversity in their arrangement, make very handsome panels for doors or screens, a very successful manner of treating this subject, is that of laying an even ground of light mezzotint over the wood before putting in the design, which can afterwards be drawn in rather dark tones upon it, the result being a rich "old" look that is very charming. This old look can always be obtained by laying in the mezzo, and after the drawing is made, rubbing in linseed oil.

Heraldic and Grotesque Designs will form another departure from previous branches. This is a form of work which will apply suitably for armorial bearings on furniture to be afterwards polished, or upon shields for hall decoration. Borders enter largely into the decoration of small articles, *i.e.*, tables, frames, etc. Plate 11 gives a few suggestions that may serve to direct attention to this subject.

CHAPTER V.

I SHALL continue with some words of advice, on two or three of the most important features of Pyrography, which will apply so generally to all work in that particular department of art, that it is deemed advisable to give them a chapter to themselves.

The reader will have noticed that all effects in Burnt-wood etching, must be achieved by two methods, either separately or in conjunction, that is, "line" work, in which all the effects are obtained by the diversity of the lines employed, and "tone" work, in which no lines are shown, but only a great variety of painting-like touches in mass, to give every idea of form and light and shade.

In connection with line work, I would mention the varied and wonderful drawings of J. M. W. Turner, as affording most valuable aid to the Pyrographic student. This great etcher spent many years of his early life in the study of line and monotint, refraining from the delights of colour until he had completely mastered both form and light and shade. This was so noticeable that the public for some time thought he could not colour !!

His long training, however, became eventually of surpassing good, its outcome being the immortal *Liber Studiorum*. When he did attempt colour drawing, his

intense previous study of natural forms, combined with his genius for ideal composition, enabled him to out-rival Claude, and placed him at once in the very front rank of artists. It is primarily with Turner's system of line that we are now engaged, and the surprising directness and economy of purpose that is shown by it.

It is highly concentrated work, every line being almost unalterable, and is made to carry out, as far as possible, the thoughts of the artist. I wish the Pyrographic student to attempt the same purpose, at any rate as far as his knowledge renders it possible.

The beauty of a decided "line" is certain to be appreciated by the spectator, and its power is not a disputed one, but appeals to the eye at once.

It is for this reason that frequently, rough sketches, with all the spirit of the artist in them, are a source of greater pleasure to the spectator than more finished work, where he has somewhat enfeebled the drawing by adding touches that do not tell in proportion to the labour expended upon them.

Previously in this book, the different varieties of line are shown, so it is not necessary to repeat what has been said concerning them; but the size of line must be borne in mind, and adapted thoughtfully to the spaces to be etched. The direction of line is also of vital importance, that is, curved lines to show roundness, vertical lines for vertical spaces, etc., etc. As the beauty and richness of engraving is obtained by variety of thickness and direction of line, so will the same means

be requisite in Pyrography. Variety of line will give variety of texture, from the extreme delicacy of flower treatment, to wild and rocky scenes in landscape, and most picturesque pieces of architecture.

Width and depth of line should also be carefully considered, and perhaps the best effects will be obtained by keeping the pale, faint, lines closer together than the deep ones, which will necessarily be wider of themselves.

I have noticed that some lines made by the point have a meagre, wiry look, that is decidedly not artistic, and I would particularly caution the reader against it. Sometimes it occurs through some eccentricity of the piece of wood in use, and sometimes through partial loss of power in the point, from its becoming encrusted, the artist will do well to keep the point always clean and bright.

A *ruled* line should never be apparent in Pyrographic work unless in connection with borders, as it gives a mechanical and laboured appearance to the work. The "burr" or "ghost" caused by the heat of the point on either side of the line should be carefully watched, as, if properly treated, it may in many cases be made a useful auxiliary instead of a defect, especially for obtaining softness, and also, what may appear strange, varieties of *hue* as well as tone; but the reader must remember that there is a decided difference in the colour of light and dark touches.

TONE.—There are many people to whom there appears something vague and mysterious in the above

term; they talk of it without understanding it, and confuse it with *hue* and *tint* in a perfectly unjustifiable manner. There is really no reason why there should be any difficulty in comprehending the meaning of the word, and every reason why the student should thoroughly master it, because so much of the excellence of any work in art depends upon it.

By the “*tone*” of any subject we mean the degree of its removal from intensest light or intensest dark. It is the entire scale of monotint, and if we may liken it to the musical scale, black would represent the lowest bass note, and white the highest treble, while middle tint might stand for the notes within the stave.

All objects possess a certain degree of tone, from the sky, as a rule, on the light end of the scale, to the deepest shadow on the dark end, and one of the greatest differences between good and bad work, will be preceptible in the management, rightly or wrongly, of the scale of tones.

By their “management” is meant their due economy and best distribution, though the latter comes somewhat under the general term of light and shade.

As the scale of tones that are at the disposal of the artist are much more restricted than those that Nature possesses, he must necessarily have his greatest light and greatest dark of less intensity than Nature, and strike as near a balance between them for middle tint as he is able. He will find it advisable to make as many tones as possible in his middle tint, and by subtle gradation rise lighter or sink darker.

PERSPECTIVE.—It may be scarcely necessary to say that a slight knowledge of the general and pictorial rules of Perspective will be found useful in Pyrography, especially when treating of out-door subjects; and more particularly necessary in representing roads or buildings, as, unless some attention be given in this matter, the roads will not appear flat nor the houses habitable.

If the artist, therefore, contemplates dealing with retiring surfaces in his Pyrographic labours, he should give an hour or two occasionally to the study of some simple work on the subject; Aaron Penley's Handbook, 1/-, will be found very good. He will thereby save himself much trouble and vexation in getting his picture to "look right," and, haply, some severe criticism from his friends.

MISTAKES AND ACCIDENTS.—When a serious mistake occurs at the beginning of a piece of work, it will be found the simplest way to have the wood re-planed and begin afresh. If, however, it be on a sunk surface, or in any position where this method is not available, the error should be erased as far as possible with glass-paper (No. 0 or 1), and the deeply-burned parts be picked out with a needle or fine etching tool. A pen-knife should never be used, as it is liable to splinter up the wood.

Slightly "bitten" errors may generally be remedied by rubbing with glass-paper only, but the artist must take care, that upon soft wood, he does not rub away sufficient to leave a groove, which will in a slight degree affect the light and shade of the picture.

A skilful draughtsman may often turn an accident to account in such a manner, as to make it of benefit to his drawing, so that what was originally a disfigurement becomes of some importance in the composition. This, however, should not be relied upon to any extent, as it would encourage carelessness, the result of which is sure to be perceptible when the work is finished.

NEGATIVE PYROGRAPHY.—This is a variety of treatment in which the Scorching Point can be used most successfully. If held rather close to the wood some excellent tone work may be done with it, creating what we might call a negative process of etching. A worn out point that from long usage is no longer of service for line work, forms a very good makeshift also for this purpose.

The student would do well to remember this when a point becomes apparently useless, and thereby make it a valuable auxiliary to the new one.

There is also another “negative” method by which a very good and soft appearance might be given to the work, that is, by scorching the entire surface of the wood in an even manner, and afterwards scraping out the various light and middle tones of the design with glass-paper and bits of glass. This may be done until the lightest parts of the design are really hollows in the wood, which yet appear to project from the dark background. For large, solid, fruit and flowers, such as peaches, roses, etc., this is very effective, but great care must be given to the management of the light and shade.

COPYING.—It is a grand thing to be born with the creative faculty, but many who are not highly gifted in this particular way, may find great delight and give considerable pleasure by reproducing the thought and works of other minds. To these I would make a few suggestions that may be of service to them.

The study of the works of the really great in art, will be found of the highest benefit, the best for line work being those of Rembrandt and Durer, and the Pyrographic student *cannot* obtain better or more valuable instruction from any source, than from conscientiously studying and endeavouring to imitate the wonderful drawing in the *Liber Studiorum* of Turner, the reproduction of some of which, line for line, would be an education in itself. It is needless to say that no better selection could be made from them than those recommended by Mr. Ruskin in his "Elements of Drawing," he being the greatest exponent of Turner the world has ever known.

The student should be most careful to copy only what is good in its way, so that his taste may be cultivated and exalted by his work, till by practice he will know at a glance a good drawing from a bad one. When reproducing engravings, he should bear in mind the faults of ordinary engravings, as well as their excellence, the chief of these, as a rule, being a stiff mechanical line that is totally antagonistic to genuinely artistic work, especially in foregrounds; comparison of an engraving with an etching from the same subject will fully bear this out.

It is difficult in Pyrography to lay down any rule as to system of working, it being a subject, of which it may be truly said, that no two people think alike; but I strongly advise not finishing a picture a little bit at a time, but gradually working up the whole; so that one part grows from the other, it will thus present a more even and harmonious result, and greater truthfulness of tone. Also on no account should the artist hurry over the work, nor, as a rule, make duplicates at the solicitation of his friends; the copy should show as much freshness as possible, and under no circumstances should it appear that he has had a certain number to make up. This appeal is addressed particularly to those who make their art labours a matter of pounds shillings and pence, and who would naturally be more prone to the above error, from having constant demands made upon brain and fingers, which they have not always inspiration sufficient to supply.

PYROGRAPHY AND PAINT.—I most strongly deprecate the uniting of stains or pigments with genuine Pyrography. Painting and Burnt-wood Etching are totally dissimilar, and the amateur who begins by “touching up” his work with oil or water-colour pigments, will end most likely in producing hybrids that are neither natural pictures nor etched monotints.

Let patience be the handmaid of the Wood Etcher, and he will not require to bring in the aid of materials and processes so diametrically opposed to the proper nature of his work.

Many arguments might be adduced to strengthen my position, the chief of which would be that the entire surface decoration of painting or staining, would, as a rule, be much less permanent than the incised line on the wood, and next its bewildering effect upon the spectator, from his not knowing whether he looks upon Poker work or Painting. He should not be thus worried, but enabled to see plainly and at once the nature of the work before him.

I fear these words, however, will not meet with universal approval; there will always be a section of workers who find it too difficult to always give their BEST, but let all who read this remember the line.

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might."

LUSTRA COLOURS.—These, as an adjunct to Pyrography, do not come under the above remarks. They are totally different to ordinary pigments; and they would not be put in the *place* of point work, but rather to enrich and adorn what is already there. They may therefore be most beneficially employed as an embellishment to many kinds of Burnt-wood Etching.

Lustra Colours will apply to Heraldry, Japanese decoration, and as tips to the plumage of Tropical Birds, etc. I would advise that in putting them on care should be taken to entirely cover the "ground," *i.e.*, to hide that portion of wood or other material where they are employed, and in some instances, doubtless, a good result may be obtained by laying them so thickly upon the wood as to show in slight relief.

The beauties of Gold and Silver united with Pyrography will be easily discerned by the reader. Gold agrees with all colours, being in itself a glorious neutral. Silver, also, has particular and symbolic qualifications. Many experiments might be made, but no inferior preparation of the metals should be used.

Lastly, I would suggest the inlaying, or nailing on of metal, steel, bronze, iron, brass or copper, for which Italian smith's work may be advantageously studied. Their applicability will be appreciated, especially with references to Ahmorial and Grotesque designs.

COMPOUND BURNING.—I mean by this the tracing of lines with a cool point over a ground that has already been very darkly burnt.

The artist should resort to this method when, on looking at his picture from a distance, he finds portions of it appear too intensely black or “blotesque :” the effect of the after touches being to make the ground appear somewhat lighter by removing a portion of the charred wood from its surface, and also to give it an added delicacy.

Whether the above amelioration is noticeable upon all woods is a subject for investigation. I have remarked it particularly on American white wood.

LEAVING THE WHITE.—This has been previously mentioned in regard to obtaining gradation in Landscape, but I would now call attention to it with reference to quite another division of Pyrography, that is, Geometrical, Arabesque or Diaper designs. In this

instance, a splendid effect can be obtained by leaving, as it were, "gleams" to shine through the pattern, in the same manner that threads of gold and silver, or brilliant colours are woven into fabrics.

Diaper patterns are very excellent for covering flat surfaces with an even decoration, where an appearance of general richness is more to be desired than any particular point of ornament, and the sudden transition from this ornamental richness to adroitly managed plain spaces is very telling. I am especially referring to designs upon a wood that is light in tone.

FRAMES.—The Pyrographic treatment of Frames is a subject that will be of some interest to a certain division of art workers, both as frames for Pyrographic sketches and as Pyrographed frames for sepia drawings, pen-and-ink sketches or old engravings.

Until quite recently there has been a great meagreness of ideas with regard to Picture Frames. Gold will always be right, as it suits any kind of colouring, and enriches the appearance of anything with which it is put in conjunction; but apart from gold, there is a very small choice of frames suitable for the very large variety of subjects that require framing. We therefore hail Pyrography as a means of adding considerably to their numbers, and believe that those of our readers who are inclined to the art of joinery and wood carving, will find the work of suitably designing frames for burning, a very pleasing addition to their hobby. The wood should be first fashioned to the size and form required,

the design traced in pencil, and then boldly and deeply etched with the point upon it, leaving it lighter or darker to suit the picture it is intended to surround.

A Pyrographed portrait which has an inch or two of margin, mounted in a richly burnt frame, has a very handsome appearance.

Mirrors also look well in frames bearing massive designs of large fruits and trailing leaves.

POLISHING.—In some cases, especially for tables or screens in which the prevailing tone is light, polishing may improve the effect of the Pyrographic design.

This can always be done at an upholsterers but it is very light, dainty work, and can be equally well done at home after a little practice. For designs in which the background is deeply and roughly burnt, so that polishing in a correct sense of the term is imposible, two or three coats of French Polish put on with a soft brush and allowed to dry between each layer, will be found a great improvement.

When, however, the surface is moderately flat, it may be put on with a rubber in the ordinary way, a small quantity of linseed oil being used with the polish to cause the rubber to glide smoothly over the surface. The rubber is composed of a piece of common wadding covered with a piece of soft rag. The polish must be put on the wool, and the rag put over it so that it soaks through evenly, a little oil can then be put on, and the

polish applied to the surface of the work. The rubbing should be in a circular direction, and the pad not allowed to *rest* on the wood or it will drag off what polish has been put on. It should be done in a warm place, so that it dries quickly. When a good body of polish has been put on, what is called "spiriting off" should be begun.

This is the application, with a clean rubber, of a small quantity of methylated spirit to clean off all the linseed oil and give a clear, bright surface. The spirit must be put on *very* lightly, so as not to disturb the surface of the polish. An odd piece of wood should be polished as a first attempt, in case of failure, but half an hour's instruction by an expert will be of more service than all we can write.

There is a preparation sold in bottles which has to be simply painted on and afterwards rubbed. This answers very well for a time, but is not permanent.

TO CLEAN PYROGRAPHIC WORK.—India-rubber and bread-crumbs will be found most efficacious, but care must be taken in rubbing fine work not to press so heavily as to injure any of the most delicate tones. Pencil outlines can be taken out with india-rubber. A curious blue tint is given to the work by allowing some of the pencil marks to show among the burnt lines, which in some cases is not displeasing.

LIGHT.—Everyone must have experienced more or less the difficulty and annoyance of getting oil paintings to receive the best and most beneficial light; in fact,

a picture may be carried round a room before it can be placed to the best advantage, so that the light upon it enriches and improves, instead of impoverishing the colouring.

Most people would think that unglazed monotint work should be free from this difficulty, but as an undoubted fact, there is a great difference in the appearance of the work, from its being in a friendly or unfriendly light. It therefore becomes important that the artist bears this in mind when either showing or finally placing his Pyrographic drawing.

CONCLUSION.

I have not attempted any fine writing in these pages, neither have I tried to say anything new about Art, the ground having been already gone over by infinitely abler hands, my purpose has been simply to draw attention to what has hitherto been a neglected branch of the parent item, and to show that as it comes under the laws that govern other recognized arts, it may with justice be classed among them.

Let us not despise it because the materials for its execution are humble. The ambition of the artist should be to *make* the value of his ground by the work he puts upon it. Slovenly work is no more allowable upon wood than upon any other material. Bad drawing will attract just as much attention as it would on canvas, and equally the truth of the artist's efforts will be apparent, no matter what ground they may be upon. I feel convinced that the actual pleasure to be found in working with the point

will give it a prominent position in the amateur world of Art. Clever lady workers will find it an endless satisfaction as a means to translating their most evanescent fancies.

“ A border fantasy of branch and flower,
And yellow-throated nestling in the nest.

Looked upon as an art teacher, the effect of Pyrographic study is to give force and decision in the rendering of form and light and shade. Surely if it does this in a small degree it is worthy of some consideration.

I most certainly believe it will obtain it. If it lead the amateur to study the monotint works of great masters a great deal will have been gained. And, lastly, if what I have said of it should lead art workers to get good training before they rush into colour, the purpose of my labours will have been answered.

THE END,



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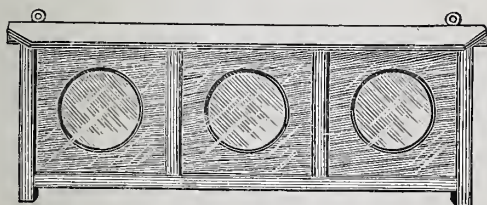
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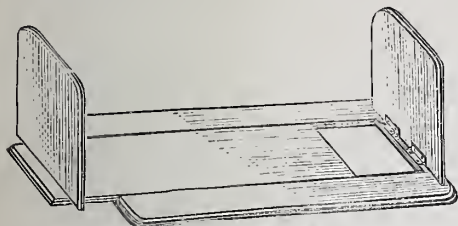
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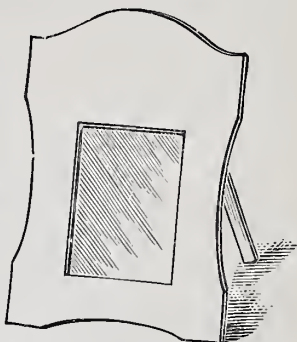
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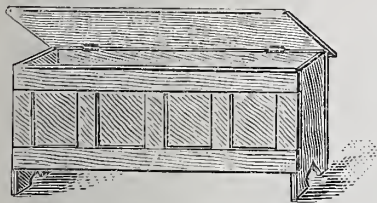
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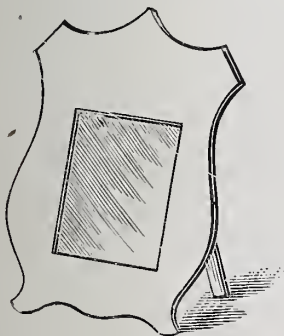
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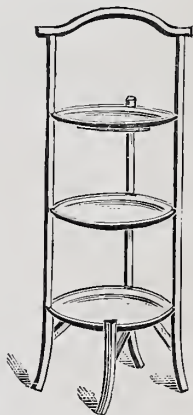
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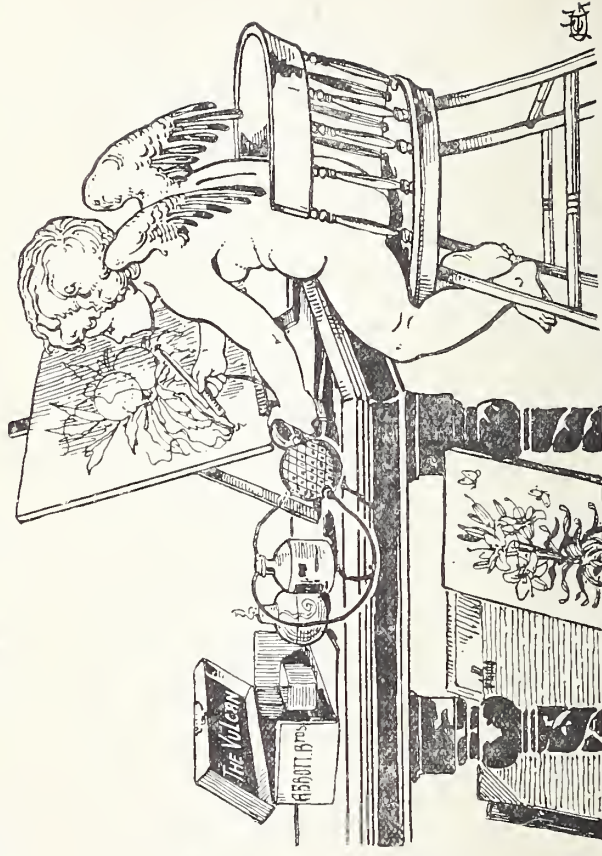
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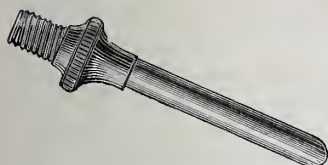
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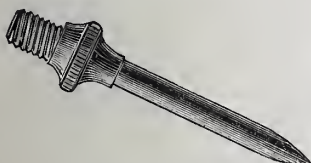
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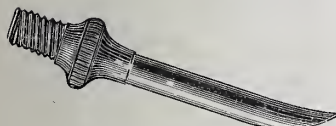
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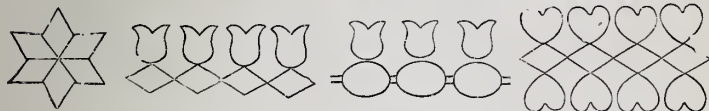
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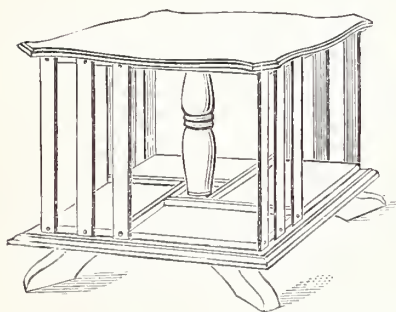
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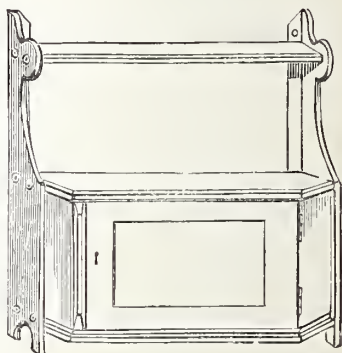
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